

SENATE RESOLUTION 211

By Williams

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Donna Joy Vance on the celebration of sixteenth birthday.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pay tribute to those citizens who are celebrating special occasions in their estimable lives; and

WHEREAS, Donna Joy Vance celebrated her sixteenth birthday on November 26, 2007, a milestone that will be commemorated as yet another precious souvenir of life's rich pageant; and

WHEREAS, this sixteenth birthday celebration is a particularly "sweet" one in that doctors and experts said it would never come to be; and

WHEREAS, seven months into her mother's pregnancy, physicians found that Donna Joy suffered from a rare disorder called holoprosencephaly, a condition in which the unborn baby's forebrain fails to properly divide into left and right hemispheres, thereby causing severe defects in the development of the face and in brain structure and function; and

WHEREAS, in recommending that she terminate her pregnancy, doctors told Lori Vance that her daughter would most likely be born blind and deaf, would have no face, no ability to swallow, and would be unable to move her arms or legs; and

WHEREAS, despite what doctors at three hospitals had told her, Mrs. Vance refused to have an abortion; she was determined to give Donna Joy a chance at life, and even if her baby had only a few precious moments on this earth, she wanted to "give her some dignity, wrap her up in a pretty blanket and say 'I love you' and let her go"; and

WHEREAS, Lori Vance finally convinced the University of Maryland Hospital to schedule a Caesarean section, and Donna Joy was born about six weeks premature; and

WHEREAS, the fight to save the life of baby Donna Joy had only just begun, as physicians refused to undertake such life-saving measures as a feeding tube or antibiotics; and

WHEREAS, however, faced with the threat of a medical malpractice lawsuit and the attention of the national media, life-sustaining medical care was ultimately provided, which enabled Donna Joy to survive those first few critical weeks; and

WHEREAS, Lori Vance's persistence kept her daughter alive, but caring for her has had its challenges; the first is medical care, which averaged one million dollars per year when Donna Joy was younger; and

WHEREAS, Donna Joy's brain diseases include holoprosencephaly, hydrocephalus, amold-chiari, and a host of others, requiring anti-seizure medications, home monitoring, and eight brain surgeries; and

WHEREAS, miraculously, and against seemingly insurmountable odds, Donna Joy has thrived; a student at Rogersville Middle School, Donna Joy speaks and has memory and independent thought skills despite missing the very parts of her brain which control these functions; and

WHEREAS, Donna Joy is proving the doctors wrong with not only her very survival but by excelling in life as well - winning medals in the Tennessee Special Olympics, with her modeling and singing, her participation in beauty pageants – these are but a few of her many accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, the Vance family's many friends in the Rogersville community recently gathered together to celebrate this important milestone in this exceptional young woman's life by hosting a "Sweet 16" party at East Rogersville Missionary Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, we wish to grasp this golden opportunity to specially recognize one of Tennessee's most outstanding citizens on this very special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby honor and congratulate Donna Joy Vance and her family on the celebration of her sixteenth birthday and extend to her our best wishes for much continued success and happiness in the years to come.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.